

APPENDIX D: DELTA REGION MUSEUM SURVEY SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

Introduction

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) entered into a contract with the National Park Service (NPS) in June 1996. Overseen by LEH Executive Director Michael Sartisky, work on the project officially began in mid-June under the direction of the Assistant Director Elizabeth Chubbuck-Meche along with intern Sara Groves.

Through this association, the LEH conducted an unprecedented study on museums within the Delta Region. A total of 714 surveys were mailed to museum organizations throughout the counties and parishes as defined by the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiatives legislation in all seven states: Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. Designed to assist the Park Service in preparing its report to Congress, the survey was used to determine the nature and level of permanent exhibitions that interpret aspects of Delta culture. A short three pages, the questionnaire required participating museums to define the focus of their permanent exhibitions and collections as well as identify: methods of interpretation, space dedication, public availability, admission fees, visitation, operating budget levels, type of location, an proximity to other tourist attractions. To document the museum community accurately, established and mid-sized museums as well as emerging ones were asked to participate.

To accomplish this, Pamela Meister, Director of the Southeastern Museums Conference, and Ester Hockett of the Midwest Museums conference lent support and provided the initial mailing lists. Target sites for each state were then selected by the individual state museum association directors who were encouraged to both update the information and to add any appropriate museums to the mailing list. The first survey dropped in mid-July with an August

2nd deadline. This was closely followed by a second survey mailing at the end of July to those museums who had not responded to the initial deadline. A postcard was also sent as a reminder of the impending final deadline, August 30th. (Because out-of-state) bulk mail required more time, correspondence within Louisiana was delayed purposely so that the materials would not be received too early. The target sites as defined by the state councils who did not respond by mail were then telephoned personally and the data was collected over the phone. All information was entered into an Excel database and quantified.

Survey Methodology

Surveys were mailed to cultural organizations in the 219 counties and parishes in the seven states bound by the Mississippi River. Defined as the Delta region in the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiatives legislation, parts of Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee have been included. The smallest territory is in Illinois encompassing only 16 counties: Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pose, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Union, While, and Williamson. Twenty-one counties are included in the state of Kentucky: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Henderson, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, McLean, Muhlenberg, Todd, Trigg, Union, and Webster. The portion of Missouri that is in the Delta is composed of 29: Bolinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Crawford, Dent, Douglas, Dunklyn, Howell, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Oregon, Ozark, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Reynolds, Ripley, St. Genevieve, St. Francois, Scott, Shannon, Stoddard, Texas, Washington, Wayne, and Wright. The 21 counties along the river in Tennessee that were included in the survey are: Benton, Carroll,

Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, McNairy, Madison, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, and Weakley. 45 counties in Mississippi, 45 parishes in Louisiana, an 42 counties in Arkansas round out the Delta geography. Because more than half of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi fall within the Delta, all counties and parishes in these states were included in the legislative definition of the Delta region.

A total of 714 cultural organization were identified in these seven states who either consider themselves to be museums or aspire to become museums. According to the Institute of Museum Services (IMS), the term museum is defined as a “nonprofit institution that is not part of the United State Government; which is organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes; owns or uses tangible objects, either animate or inanimate; cares for these objects; and exhibits them to the general public on a regular basis.”

There were 349 museums responded to the survey, producing a healthy return rate of 49%. Due to the geographical distribution defined by the Delta legislation, some states had a significantly higher response rate than others. All states had above or very close to a 50% return. Although only 28 museums were identified to received the survey, Kentucky yielded the highest number of responses with 86% or 24 returned surveys. Likewise, the survey was mailed to 47 museums in Illinois with 30 or 64% participating in the study. Tennessee followed with 56% or 29 museums responding out of a possible 52. 54% or 36 of 67 museums in Missouri returned surveys. Three states, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana had no geographic restrictions. Thus, more museums in these states were solicited; yet they had the lowest percentage of return. 118 surveys were mailed to museums in Arkansas; 53% or 62 were returned. Mississippi had a 44% response rate with 60 out of 136 museums reporting. Yielding the highest number of surveys but the lowest percentage of participation, 107 of the 251 Louisiana

museums participated, a total of 43% (see the attached statistical results and individual state profiles for the survey).

Note that to ensure accuracy of response, each state museum association was asked to participate in the project by verifying addresses and providing a list of sites which they felt should be targeted most heavily. Arkansas’ list was composed of 42 museums. 32 were contacted successfully; thus 76% of the target sites have been included. In Illinois, 21 out of 31 participated (68%). Kentucky provided 8 names, 5 of whom agreed to take part (63%). 63% or 17 out of 27 were contacted in Missouri. Mississippi had the highest percentage with 84% or 16 out of 19 participating and Louisiana yielded 73% (30 out of 41). Although several individuals in Tennessee were contacted by telephone and mail, the state museum association did not provide a list of target sites. However, those museums who appeared to be most suitable were identified by the LEH and solicited more heavily. Thus, 69% or 9 out of a possible 13 have been included.

The statistics and their implications as stated on the following pages are based upon these responses. Data was divided into several subgroups, namely: 1) all museums with permanent exhibitions; 2) all museums without permanent exhibitions; and 3) listings for museums in each state with permanent exhibitions.

Survey Results — Composition

Classification. Of the 349 organization who responded to the survey, the vast majority classify themselves as either an historic house or site (32% or 113) or as a history museum (31% or 109). 21% (73) defined themselves as cultural heritage institutions, i.e., museums dedicated to preserving the cultural history of their region or of a particular minority group. The museums most apt to describe themselves as an historic house or site were located in either Missouri (61%), Illinois (40%), or Tennessee (34%). Kentucky (43%), Arkansas (40%), and Missouri (39%) institutions had the highest percentage

defining themselves as history museums. In Louisiana, approximately the same number of museums consider them-selves to be historical sites (32%) as those dedicated to cultural heritage (31%). A significantly smaller number of museums overall were dedicated to art (13% or 44), general subjects (8% or 29), and nature and science (6% or 22). Although Louisiana reported the highest number of art museums with 13, Kentucky reported the highest percentage with 25% of its participants dedicated to the visual arts. 10% of both Arkansas and Mississippi classified themselves as nature and science centers. Of the 30 museums who reported that they do not house permanent exhibitions, the majority were art organizations (11 or 37%). (Note that although museum participants were asked to choose the one response that best described their type of museum, some respondents selected more than one.)

Public Availability. The average length of time the survey respondents have been open to the public is approximately 23 years. The length of time reported ranged from a few months to 122 years. Of the four museums 100 years of age or more, the oldest institution participating in the survey is the Southern Illinois University Museum which opened in 1874. Of the 18 who were not yet open, most plan to be available to the public within the next two years. The majority of these cultural organization (35% or 117) are open to the general public seven days a week, although the number of open hours per week varies greatly. 23% or 77 responded that they are open for six days and 16% or 54 are open for five. However, 10% or 32 museums report that they are available for less than 120 hours or 15 full-time days a year whereas 23 (7%) museums are open by appointment only. (33 museums or 10% did not respond to the question.)

Annual Operating Budget. A significant predictor of organizational stability, the museum survey respondents' average annual operating budget is \$250,000 or below. Showing a wide disparity, both the lowest and the highest annual budget sizes reported were in Louisiana. The

lowest figure provided was \$500 compared to the highest budget of \$10,095,273.

The Institute of Museum Services defines a small museum as a museum that has an annual operating budget of \$250,000 or less. 79% or 275 museums in the Delta region have operating budgets of this size. Thus, according to this definition, over two-thirds of the survey respondents may be classified as small museums. Approximately half (139 or 40%) of these small cultural organizations reported budgets of \$100,000 or less.

Only 23% or 63 institutions may be termed mid to large with operating funds amounting to \$250,000 or above. 21 of these institutions have annual budgets of 1 million or more (8%). Louisiana claimed 8 or 38% of those with annual budgets of 1 million or more followed by Tennessee with 5 or 24%. The state reportedly operating with the lowest funding levels is Missouri with no museums reporting a budget of more than \$250,000. Comparatively, Tennessee appears to have the highest with 42% (10 out of 29) of its museum budgets equal to or above \$250,000, half of which are at a million or more. Arkansas follows with 38% or 20 out of 62 museums responding to the survey have funding levels of 1 million or more. Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi all reported approximately the same percentage of mid to large museums with 25%, 28%, and 28% respectively. Illinois listed only two museums with annual operating budgets of \$250,000 or more.

Approximately half of all the survey participants in each state reported operating funds of less than \$100,000. Missouri had the highest number of low budget participants with 81% (21 out of 36). Illinois also responded with a large percentage, 77% or 17 out of 30 museums.

From these results, it appears that the museums in the Delta region are the same as museums in other parts of the country in terms of the size of their annual budgets. These figures may be compared to those resulting from the American Association of Museum's most recent *National*

Museums Survey published in 1989. According to this study, 38% of museums nationwide report annual operating budgets of \$50,000 or less. 57% have annual budgets of \$100,000 or less and a mere 8% have budgets of one million or more. When museum type and budget size are taken into consideration, the survey concluded that 81% of the nation's museums can be classified as small, 12% as medium, and 7% as large institutions.

Admission. Approximately half (47% or 164) of the survey respondents charge an admission fee. The price ranges from \$0.00 to \$17, with the average price set at \$2. The lowest admission fees appear to be in Illinois with an average ticket price of \$0.59. The highest is Tennessee with an average of \$2.78. Of the respondents who do not charge admission, 8% (15) request that visitors give a donation in lieu of admission fees.

Tourism

Visitation. A grant total of 13,097,433 people reportedly visited museums in the Delta region during 1995. (81% answered the question; 19% or 49 museums were unable to provide a figure.) Approximately half of the survey respondents (53% or 138) reported 10,000 or more visitors. 87% or 226 museums had attendance levels up to 25,000. 74 museums or 29% of the survey respondents reported more than 25,000 visitors. A small percentage, 20% (51) had fewer than 1,000. Louisiana showed the highest single figure, an impressive 4,278,619, partly due to the popular blockbuster Monet exhibition presented by the New Orleans Museum of Art and the popular Aquarium of the Americas. Arkansas also had a healthy attendance of 3,275,639 as well as Tennessee with 2,573,775 museum visitors. Mississippi reported a large attendance rate with 1,118,931. A wide disparity in attendance levels was reported per institution. For instance, the Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans, Louisiana, claimed the highest single attendance with 1,042,184. Conversely, only 50 visitors were reported in Sesser, Illinois, by the Goode Barren Genealogical Society.

Locals vs Tourists. It appears that on the average approximately the same number of locals (46%) versus out-of-towners (54%) frequent museums in the Delta region. All seven states reported a slightly higher turnout for out-of-towners than local folks. This appears to be particularly true for rural museums who tended to report a slightly higher percentage of tourists than that reported by urban museums — 53% (76 of the 144 who answered the question) of the rural museums reported that more than half their annual visitation was composed of out-of-towners compared to 40% (33 out of 82) of the urban centers. Likewise, urban museums tended to report a higher level of local participation with 44% or 36 museums citing more local visitors than tourists; 33% or 47 rural museums cited this as happening. And 10% of both the rural and the urban museums reported that their visitation was composed of exactly half local and half non-local people.

Location. Rural organizations comprised the majority of the survey pool: 165 (47%) of the survey respondents described their location as rural compared with 93 (27%) who described their location as urban. The state reporting the most museums in rural environments is Missouri with 78% (28) outside urban centers followed by Illinois with 73% (22). Note that rural does not necessarily equate with small, i.e., annual budgets of \$250,000 or less. While rural organizations accounted for 34% (93) of all small museums, almost half (44% or 72) reported that their annual budgets are \$250,000 or more. Likewise, urban institutions comprised 53% (28) of mid to large sized budgets, i.e. over \$250,000; yet 70% or 65 are small museums. The largest percentage of urban museums appears to be in Tennessee (34%), most of which are located in Memphis. Of the remainder of the survey pool, another 33 (9%) survey participants describe their environment as suburban. The rest (57 or 16%) are part of an inner-city neighborhood.

Other Tourist Venues. Despite their location, the vast majority of these institutions reported that they were situated within a half-hour's drive of additional tourist attractions. Although

nine museums (3%) did not list any additional entertainment venues, a few were in or near to urban centers; thus, the true percentage beyond 30 minutes of such amenities is minuscule; 97% or 340 museums claim at least one nearby attraction. Of these, 94% or 327 are able to list two, and 87% or 305 list three attractions. According to the comments on the survey form, these tourist venues ran the gamut from football stadiums and casinos to national parks, historical sites, and other local museums.

Permanent Exhibitions

Long-term Displays. A permanent exhibition is defined as a long-term, committed display. The length is not confined but left up to the determination of the respondent. 91% (319) of the museums who responded to the survey reported that they do have permanent exhibitions on display in their facilities. Although they do maintain temporary short-term displays, a small number, 9% or 30 institutions, report that they do not have any permanent exhibitions. Mississippi has the highest number of survey respondents without permanent displays, 10, followed by Louisiana with 8 such museums.

Space Dedication Of these 319 museums who do maintain permanent exhibitions, the range of space dedicated to these long-term displays varied greatly. The mathematical average overall was 6,918 square feet. However, 44% (152) of all survey respondents reported that their total exhibition space was 5,000 square feet or fewer. Approximately half (53% or 81) of these museums with less space were located in rural areas. Urban museums were not necessarily more apt to have larger facilities. Of the 27% (93) who had more than 5,000 square feet of display room, 40 or 43% were in urban environments. Note, however, that 26% or 84 of survey participants did not provide a response to this question.

Stories of the Delta

Themes. Covering a wide range of topics, survey respondents with permanent exhibitions were asked a variety of questions concerning four central themes of particular relevance to the Delta region. Survey participants were asked to identify those themes that relate to their primary mission. With only slight variation, the museums in all seven states appear to focus on the same stories, albeit to a different degree. Although these individual themes are more in evidence in some states than in others, the order of prevalence is the same. When placed in rank order, these stories of the Delta fall in the following pattern: the interpretation of one or more cultural discipline; the culture of a specific minority population group; the struggle between people and political, social, or natural forces; and the Mississippi River and its physical landscape. Kentucky is the only state that does not follow this exact order with more museum exhibitions focused on struggles and less on multicultural groups.

Cultural Disciplines. The cultural disciplines defined in the survey were music, literature, visual art, education, architecture, and history. Within this list, the vast majority of museums, regardless of whether or not they have permanent exhibitions, responded that they focus on history (81% or 283). The next most prevalent type of discipline was the visual arts, which resulted in a 40% (138) response. Education and architecture were both selected by 33% (115/116) of the museum respondents. Despite the strong perception of a connection to Delta culture, the least interpreted disciplines in Delta region museums are literature and music.

Despite the fact that most museums in the Delta region have one or more cultural disciplines as the core component of their displays, few interpret these disciplines from a national vantage point. Only 84 institutions or 26% report that their displays reflect a national focus. Rather, the intent is apt to be primarily local (54% or 172) or regional (50% or 160) in scope. The state of Tennessee appears to have the most museums telling their story from a national

viewpoint (48% or 13) compared to Illinois with the highest number reporting a local focus (64% or 17).

History. For those museums who have permanent exhibitions, 84% or 270 museums indicated history was the central discipline pervading their exhibitions. Within each state, history was selected by 80% or more of the museums despite their location. Illinois resulted in the highest percentage of permanent exhibitions focusing on history, 93%, with Mississippi at the opposite end of the spectrum at 80%. The topics explored in these long-term displays that were most frequently mentioned in the survey (94 comments) were general historical subjects indigenous to the Delta region such as wine-making, prisons, spas, Mardi Gras customs, and voodoo practices. The histories of various ethnic and minority population groups was also a popular subject as evidenced by the comments of 43 respondents. The various groups mentioned on the survey included African-Americans, Native Americans, and Euro Americans as well as Cajuns and Creoles, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, and the American pioneers. Military history from the Revolutionary War to Operation Desert Storm was the primary focus shared by 36 museums. Moreover, historical figures with a strong connection to the Delta also appeared to be prevalent. These famous individuals included General John A. Logan, Kate Chopin, Jefferson Davis, General George S. Patton, Edward Douglas White, Alex Haley, and Elvis among others.

Visual Arts. The other five cultural disciplines, i.e. visual art, architecture, education, music and literature, were demonstrated by less than half of the survey respondents. 38% or 121 museums with long-term exhibitions strive to educate the public concerning the visual arts. Kentucky reported the largest number of art museums with 52% (12). Louisiana (48) and Tennessee (13) also resulted in a high return rate, each with a 48% response. From the survey comments, it may be determined that more than half of these museums center on the interpretation of national and international artists in various media,

including but not limited to painting, sculpture, pottery, photography, and the decorative arts. Permanent exhibitions composed primarily of the work of Southern artists comprised the displays of at least 28 survey participants. Nineteen museums commented that their displays were of regional fine arts. Note that Southern and regional art are not necessarily synonymous; Illinois or Missouri are not considered Southern although they are defined as part of the Delta region.

Architecture. Yielding 34%, 110 museums with long-term displays reported that they interpret architectural themes. Louisiana museums appeared to be more apt than the other six states to have exhibitions with architecture as a central discipline. Louisiana resulted in a 44% return compared to Missouri with 39% and Tennessee with 33%. These architectural exhibitions appeared primarily to take the forms of buildings of historical significance, such as state capitols, jails, churches, and sites on the National Historic Register as well as homes of famous figures, including Arna Bontemps, Kate Chopin, Elvis, Buford Pusser, Davy Crockett, and various Civil War Generals (49). Specific architectural styles, namely Shaker, French-Colonial, German-Romanesque, Victorian, Greek Revival, and *poteux en terre*, also appear to be frequently interpreted subjects.

Education. Despite the fact that all museums considered their main goal to be the education of the public, education as a cultural discipline is the core component of long-term exhibitions in 105 museum participants (33%). This is approximately the same response garnered for architectural displays. Just as Louisiana appeared to have the largest number of architectural exhibitions, this state also seemed to be more apt to have educational displays (43%). Tennessee and Missouri responded that 37% and 36% respectively of their long-term exhibitions focused on educational subjects. The topics shared on the survey form included the one-room schoolhouse, plantation, and other early country schools as well as pioneering individuals in the field of education.

Music. Undeniably, the Delta region has distinctive musical and literary styles. However, the interpretation of both music and literature does not appear to be a strong exhibition theme in Delta region museums. Only 18% or 58 museums stated that music was the primary subject of their permanent exhibitions. However, this may be due to the fact that history as a cultural discipline also may encompass the exploration of musical topics. Louisiana and Kentucky appeared to be the two states most likely to have exhibitions with this focus (26%). As evidenced by 16 survey participants, the topic explored in these long-term displays that was most frequently mentioned in the survey was the development of little known musical forms such as German folk songs, Native American chants, Ozark music, pioneer songs, protest lyrics, and Mardi Gras songs. Musical styles indigenous to the Delta were mentioned less frequently; however, musical styles, including Cajun and Zydeco (10), Delta blues (9), Jazz (7), and Bluegrass (3) were also prevalent. Also popular, 12 responses related to displays that incorporate musical instruments, such as Indian drums, banjos, pianos, dulcimers, school band instruments, organs, and fifes.

Literature. Regardless of location, few museums responded that one of the main purposes of their permanent exhibitions was the interpretation of literature. Only 14% or 44 museums answered that affirmatively. Nevertheless, the homes of famous literary personalities figured prominently as architectural exhibitions, such as writer Kate Chopin's house. Thus, this statistic may be somewhat misleading. Louisiana appeared to have the largest number of literary exhibitions (17%) followed by Mississippi (16%). Judging from the survey comments, most literary displays (20) appeared to either detail the work of a single author such as Mark Twain, Ernest Gaines, or Arna Bontemps, or they expounded upon a particular subject, style or period involving several authors, such as Louisiana literature, manuscripts of 1930s westerns, and 19th century literary classics to name a few. The majority of museums who specified that the core component of their exhibitions centered

upon a literary topic interpreted one or more local or regional writer. Several museums also identified their library or archive as a long-term display, most of which house publications expounding upon topics related to the museum's mission, natural science, or Mississippi history for example.

Multicultural Displays. Partly due to the country's growing recognition of multiculturalism, more museums nationwide are seeking to open up their exhibitions to incorporate previously overlooked population groups. Over half the museums in all seven states embrace ethnic or minority population groups. A total of 61% or 194 museums overall report that they interpret one or more of the federally recognized minority population groups as one of their main exhibition purposes. Conversely, 140 or 40% report that such cultures are not part of their mission. Of those museums for whom minority population groups are a significant theme of their permanent exhibitions, Native American culture appears to be the most prevalent subject. 34% or 110 institutions focus on Native Americans. The majority of museums whose displays center on Native Americans appear to be located in Illinois (46%) closely followed by Arkansas (43%); 32% or 101 identified Euro-Americans as a primary subject and 31% or 99 centered on African-Americans. Those museums focusing on African-American are primarily located in Tennessee (44%) and Louisiana (41%) while museums in Missouri have the highest number of Euro American exhibitions (39%). The 11% or 34 who focus on the Acadian (Cajun) culture are almost exclusively situated in Louisiana; however, Missouri and Tennessee also have a few such displays.

Struggles. The interpretation of struggle(s) between people and political, economic, social, and/or natural forces is a main exhibition component for 133 (42%) of the survey respondents. Louisiana and Kentucky have the highest percentages of displays focusing on struggles with 45% and 43% respectively. Tennessee is the least apt to have permanent museum exhibitions dedicated to this topic, with

only 24% or seven survey respondents. According to survey comments, the most prevalent struggle interpreted by museums in the Delta region appeared to be the Civil War with 38 museums reporting that they have such displays. The struggle of marginalized population groups fighting to achieve equal status accounted for 26 replies; this struggle included African-Americans, Native Americans, Euro American, Creoles, and Cajuns. The third most frequently identified struggle shared by 22 survey participants was man against nature including hurricanes and floods. Eleven museums responded that their main focus was the struggle against slavery.

The Mississippi River. Despite the river's strong influence on Delta culture, the Mississippi River as an exhibition theme appeared to be the least popular subject for all seven states. Of those museums reporting to have long-term displays, only 23% or 74 museums stated that they interpret the Mississippi River and its physical landscape, including natural disasters and the transformation of the natural environment. However, each state had a minimum of three survey participants reporting the Mississippi River as its main exhibition focus. Missouri was most apt to have museum displays of this nature with 33% or 11 permanent displays. Contrary to Missouri, Kentucky had the least with only 13% or three displays. The most common interpretation listed on the survey form was the flood of 1927 which is shared by 13 museums. The importance of wildlife, wetlands, and the conservation of nature in general was commented on by nine museums. Likewise, the Mississippi River's effect on the culture of various population groups, namely Native American, African-Americans, Euro Americans, and Cajuns, also appears to be a prevalent interpretation (6).

Permanent Collections

Museum Collections. With 95% or 331 museums reporting affirmatively, almost all survey respondents had tangible objects that

they own and/or care for. Most of these museums also housed permanent exhibitions in their facilities. However, of the 91% or 319 museums who reported that they had long-term displays, seven responded that they did not have permanent collections for which they were responsible. This might mean that although these museums actually cared for the items they exhibited, they might be borrowing objects as opposed to owning them and thus had difficulty interpreting the question. The items collected by Delta region museums varied widely and reflected the specific mission of the museum itself. They types of objects identified on the survey form ran the gamut from Egyptian artifacts to taxidermies, Civil War artifacts to ship models, Norman Rockwell paintings to an electric chair, etc. Although history museums, for example, may be more inclined to store documents and artifacts, Delta region museums were not necessarily more apt to acquire one type of collection over another.

Methods of Interpretation. Regardless of whether or not their facilities have permanent exhibitions, all museum participants reported approximately the same methods of interpreting their exhibitions to visitors. The most prevalent method museums used to engage their visitors appeared to be through the provision of guided tours (83% or 290). Labels and signs are also a much-used means of educating audiences as reported by 73% or 256 museums; 71% or 249 responded that they provide brochures and catalogues to disseminate exhibition information and 64% or 222 present public lectures and demonstrations. Half of the museums (50% or 173) surveyed responded that they include an audiovisual component with their exhibitions. Hands-on displays to interact with audiences were present in 48% or 168 museums whereas an archive or research library is a key method of interaction within 44% or 154 museums. A creative approach to teaching, such as living history presentations were part of only 32% or 103 museum itineraries.

Conclusion

The Average Delta Museum Profile. Each state in the Delta Region exhibits its own individuality. However, from the data collected, a profile of the average museum in the Delta region may be drawn. Such a museum is most apt to be an institution dedicated to history or a subject of historical value that pertains to a specific site or building. The organization has been operating as a museum entity for 23 years and its collections and exhibitions are available to the general public seven days a week. Operating on an annual budget of \$100,000 or less, this small museum charges an admission rate of \$2.00 per adult. Located in a predominantly rural environment, approximately 10,000 people visit the facility, half of whom are local residents and half of whom come from out of town. At least one additional tourist venue is situated within a 30-mile drive. The museum has permanent collections that are either owned by the organization or on long-term loan that it is responsible for. These objects are on display in permanent exhibitions that are interpreted primarily through an historical theme and provide the viewer with a local or regional perspective. Guided tours, labels, signage, brochures and catalogues as well as public lectures are the predominant means of engaging and educating visitors. While this image may provide a parameter to visualize a typical Delta region museum, each state has its own unique characteristics, particularly with regards to what stories they choose to interpret.